

## ***Section II                      Planning Process***

### **A. Project Leadership**

The Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency is the lead County agency responsible for development and maintenance of the Schoharie County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Senior Planner in the department is project leader for the planning process and is also designated the Schoharie County Hazard Mitigation Coordinator. Principal leadership support for Hazard Mitigation Plan development and maintenance is provided by the Schoharie County Emergency Management Office Director. Funding, guidance and resources for Plan development in 2006 and the 2013 update were provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Grant program and the New York State Office of Emergency Management (NYS OEM) Mitigation Program.

### **B. Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee**

The Schoharie County Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HMPC) consists of a broad range of local government officials and key agency leaders who are responsible for providing guidance, developing policy and organizing government and community support in the development and maintenance of the Schoharie County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan. A key role of the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee is to support coordination and activities needed to secure resources and insure that the goals, objectives and projects outlined in the Plan are effectively implemented. The HMPC is chaired by the Chairman of the Schoharie County Board of Supervisors. The County Planning and Development Agency provides organizational resources and support for the HMPC and the Senior Planner serves as Deputy Chair and Administrative Officer for the HMPC. The Board of Supervisors approved a resolution in December 2011 (Appendix 5) that revised and appointed members of the HMPC; the membership in 2013 includes the following.

Schoharie County Flood Committee Chair	Anthony Van Glad
Planning and Development Agency	Shane Nickle
Planning and Development Agency	Brian Fleury
Acting Emergency Management Director	Kevin Neary
Emergency Management	Colleen Fullford
County Public Health	Asante Shipp-Hilts
County Sheriff	Anthony Desmond
Fire Coordinator	Matt Brisley
Emergency Medical Services (EMS)	Andy Cuccinello
Public Works	Dan Crandell
Soil and Water Conservation District	Peter Nichols
Cobleskill Regional Hospital	Pat Richards

The Board of Supervisors resolution creating the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee also states that municipalities, when contacted, are encouraged to cooperate and participate in the update and implementation of the Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Schoharie County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), which serves as an emergency management, disaster response and hazardous materials preparedness coordinating body, also assists the HMPC with programs and activities related to development and implementation of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

### C. Project Organization

The original Schoharie County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan was developed and approved in 2006, but formal hazard mitigation planning began in Schoharie County after the flooding of 1996 -- work on the first plan formulated under the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 began in 2003. Activities and meetings that were held to prepare the original 2006 plan are outlined in Appendix 5 of this plan. The HMPC typically meets on the third Thursday of each month or more often as needed. The following table outlines the dates that HMPC meetings were held to discuss and prepare development of this 2013 plan update. A sampling of meeting notices, agendas and topics is included in Appendix 2.

#### **Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee Meetings**

HMPC Meetings		
2012	January 27	Planning goals, schedule, resources and information gathering
2012	February 23, 24	
2012	March 7, 8	Discuss county goals and consolidated municipal objectives
2012	September 26, 27, 28	Review municipal projects and goals for each jurisdiction
2013	January 24	Discuss and integrate recovery activities undertaken for the 2011 flooding
2013	February 28	
2013	June 27	Review Hazard Mitigation Plan Draft

#### **Description of Planning Events and Participant Activities**

Planning meetings, briefings and workshops were used to review planning goals, evaluate mitigation issues and to seek input from the participating jurisdictions in development of the Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan. Emails and planning reports were also exchanged with participating agencies and local jurisdictions.

### *Kick-Off Meetings*

A series of Kick-Off meetings were held with the participating jurisdictions between January of 2012 and September of 2012. The purpose of the local Kick-Off meetings were to outline the goals and scope of the hazard mitigation planning process and identify what information and input would be required from plan participants. An important outcome of the Kick-Off meetings was to meet with community leaders and formulate hazard mitigation strategies and proposed projects that would become a core product of the Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan.

A general Kick-Off meeting that included representatives of Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency was held on January 27, 2012. The meeting objective was to brief the HMPC Planning team and clarify individual roles and responsibilities related to the Plan update. For those jurisdictions who desired special assistance with hazard mitigation planning work, additional meetings and follow-up opportunities were offered. A notice about these meetings and worksheets used to capture information about proposed hazard mitigation proposals and projects is included in Appendix 2.

### *Risk Assessment Meeting*

A joint meeting was also held with the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HMPC) and the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) that used the State's interactive hazard evaluation program, *Hazard Analysis – New York (HAZNY)* to begin revision of the Risk Assessment for this updated Hazard Mitigation Plan. The HAZNY, which is summarized in the Section III of this Plan, is used to examine the kinds of hazards that could potentially affect Schoharie County and serves as a building block for the comprehensive risk assessment included in Section III of this Plan. This meeting also addressed preparation of the state and federal *Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA)*, a worksheet prepared by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to evaluate state and local natural and manmade hazards. The results of the THIRA are also integrated with the HAZNY and Risk Assessment in Section III.

### *Local/On-Site Planning Activities*

As the Hazard Mitigation planning process continued, it was necessary to conduct various on-site meetings with local officials in the participating jurisdictions; and on occasion planning materials and documents were obtained using email and telephone. The purpose and outcomes of these local/on-site activities included the following.

- Identify potential mitigation sites and proposals
- Evaluate and prioritize mitigation projects
- Collect and exchange project data, maps, work descriptions and cost estimates for hazard mitigation proposals

- Review and provide opportunities for feedback regarding hazard mitigation proposals, projects, plan preparation and implementation
- Work with community officials to seek citizen input and participation in Plan development

#### *September 2012 Planning Workshop*

It was determined that another general meeting of the Plan participants was needed to insure planning continuity, integration and implementation. The purpose and outcomes of the planning workshop included the following.

- There were new officials and representatives in the participating jurisdictions that required orientation to the hazard mitigation planning process and familiarization with planning work that had occurred previously
- There was a postponement in the planning process, so even those participants involved in the earlier workshop required an update about planning work that had been undertaken previously and what activities remained
- The workshop was an opportunity to review the mitigation strategies and goals that had been produced earlier in the planning process and allowed the participants to refine and amend their proposals and consider new or updated projects.

#### *After-Action and Improvement Plan Meetings*

Preparation of the Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan was begun in the months after the devastating flooding in the Schoharie Valley in 2011. As part of the post-disaster recovery process for the 2011 flooding, Schoharie County conducted meetings and prepared an After-Action Report and Improvement Plan (AAR/IP) that captured suggestions and recommendations for improving flood preparedness and response. Many of the suggestions and improvement plan recommendations centered on hazard mitigation activities and were used or incorporated in the preparation of this 2013 Hazard Mitigation Plan update.

#### *Board of Supervisors Flood Committee*

The County Board of Supervisors, the legally designated governing body for Schoharie County, maintains this Standing Committee that advises the Board on issues related to flooding; including development and implementation of the Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan and projects that will prevent or reduce flood risks and vulnerabilities. This committee meets monthly, and as Supervisors these elected officials also serve as the Chief Executive Officers of the respective towns they represent.

<b>Board of Supervisors Flood Committee – 2013 Membership</b>	
Anthony Van Glad, Chair	Town of Gilboa
James S. Buzon	Town of Middleburgh
Gene Milone	Town of Schoharie
Robert Mann, Jr.	Town of Blenheim
Philip Skowfoe, Jr	Town of Fulton
Earl Van Wormer, III	Town of Esperance

In ten (10) meetings held in 2011, eleven (11) meetings in 2012 and five (5) in the first half of 2013, the Board of Supervisors Flood Committee discussed and authorized action related to the following flood and hazard mitigation topics

Status of High Hazard Dams	Developing a Floodplain/Stormwater Management website
Flood gauges for area creeks	Active and proposed Hazard Mitigation grants
Bridge conditions and scouring	Highway drainage and erosion concerns
Stream debris and gravel deposits	Update of the Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan
Floodplain mapping	Flood prevention on county-owned properties
Discussion of flood-risk properties	Training for local Floodplain Managers
Citizen flood concerns and issues	Coordination with School Districts on flood projects
Flood impacts on historic preservation	Repair and mitigation for flooded roads
Rights-of-Way for flood mitigation work	Legal issues on private property along streams
Flood mitigation help for homeowners	Local and matching funds available for flood mitigation

In each of these meetings, representatives of the following agencies provided regular updates, reports and information related to flood and hazard mitigation issues.

Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency  
 Schoharie County Emergency Management  
 Schoharie County Public Works  
 Soil and Water Conservation Service (SWCS)

At many meetings of the Flood Committee, representatives of the following also participated

NYC Department of Environmental Protection (Gilboa Dam)  
 New York Power Authority (Blenheim-Gilboa Dam)  
 Schoharie County Sheriff  
 Representative of Congressman Paul D. Tonko (20<sup>th</sup> District NY)  
 Cannon Design (County Hazard Mitigation Plan contractor)

*Schoharie County Stream Team*

After the 2011 flooding and based on experiences from the 1996 and 2006 floods, it was determined that an integrated agency committee would be formed to consider problems and issues with local streams that were contributing to flood risks. The committee was formed to look at watershed issues, stream corridor management, drainage, runoff, debris and other factors; and determine if local resources or outside assistance could be mobilized to mitigate stream threats and flooding. Many of the hazard mitigation projects and proposals outlined in this Plan were reviewed, and others generated as a result of the work of this committee.

<b>Stream Team Membership</b>	
Peter Nichols, Chair	Schoharie County Soil and Water District
Brenda Weaver	Schoharie County Soil and Water District
Colleen Fullford	Schoharie County Emergency Management
Shane Nickle	Schoharie County Planning and Development
Zach Thompson	Schoharie County Planning and Development
Peter Irwin	Municipal Code Enforcement Officer
Lloyd Stannard	Municipal Code Enforcement Officer
John DeMis	Schoharie County Department of Public Works
Bob Richter	New York State Department of Transportation

In addition to meetings with the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HMPC), Supervisors Flood Committee, Stream Team, Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and each of the participating jurisdictions, planning staff that prepared this 2013 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update met with or received input from the following organizations that have reviewed or contributed to preparation of the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan.

- ❖ Town and County Highway and Public Works Superintendent's Association
- ❖ Association of Town and Village Officers
- ❖ Schoharie County Fire Chiefs
- ❖ Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District
- ❖ Board of Supervisors Standing Committees for:
  - Radio and Emergency Services
  - Highways

**D. Participating Jurisdictions and Agencies**

Each of the sixteen (16) towns and six (6) villages located within Schoharie County were included in the original 2006 Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan and were again participants in the 2013 plan update. Participating officials from the towns were the Supervisors of each jurisdiction, who also serve on the Schoharie County Board of Supervisors, and the Mayors of each of the six (6) villages. The input of these officials was also supplemented by key staff in their respective jurisdictions; including the Highway/Streets Superintendent, Planning and Zoning officials, Code and Building officers and Fire Chiefs.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Supervisor or Mayor</b>
Town of Blenheim	Robert Mann Jr.
Town of Broome	Anne Batz
Town of Carlisle	Larry Bradt
Town of Cobleskill Village of Cobleskill	Thomas Murray Jr. Mayor Mark A. Galasso
Town of Conesville	Donald (Mike) Brandow
Town of Esperance Village of Esperance	Earl Van Wormer Mayor Steven Miller
Town of Fulton	Philip Skowfoe Jr.
Town of Gilboa	Anthony VanGlad
Town of Jefferson	Daniel Singletary
Town of Middleburgh Village of Middleburg	James S. Buzon Mayor Matthew Avitable
Town of Richmondville Village of Richmondville	Richard Lape Mayor Kevin Neary
Town of Schoharie Village of Schoharie	Eugene Milone Mayor John Borst
Town of Seward	J. Carl Barbic
Town of Sharon Sharon Springs Village	Sandra Manko Mayor Omer Cousineau
Town of Summit	Harold Vroman
Town of Wright	William Vroman

County Departments

Schoharie County and applicable departments were also participants in the Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan as following.

Department	Planning Contact
Planning and Development	Alicia Terry, Director
Emergency Management	Kevin Neary, Acting Director
Public Health	Asante Shipp-Hilts, Director
Sheriff	Anthony Desmond, Sheriff
Public Works	Dan R. Crandall, Commissioner
Fire Coordinator EMS Coordinator	Matt Brisely William Averill

Supporting Agencies

The following agencies provided planning support, technical input and advice to Schoharie County HMPC. Representatives and contacts from supporting agencies changed through the planning process, depending on the special knowledge or program experience required and availability.

Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District  
NYS Office of Emergency Management (OEM)  
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)  
NYS Department of State, Code Enforcement  
National Weather Service (NWS), Albany and/or Binghamton, NY  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
NY State Geologist Office  
New York Power Authority  
NYS Department of Transportation (DOT)  
NYC Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP)  
The Pipeline Group  
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)



**Type of Participation in the Hazard Mitigation Planning Process**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Type of Participation</b>
Board of Supervisors	Project Supervision and Oversight Plan Review and Input Identify and Develop Mitigation Goals and Strategies Provide Information to the Public and Seek Citizen Input
Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HMPC)	Project Supervision and Oversight Plan Review and Input Research, Data Collection and Fact-Finding Document Preparation and Organization Meeting Coordination and Presentations Identification and Evaluation of Hazards Identify and Develop Mitigation Goals and Strategies Provide Information to the Public and Seek Citizen Input
Participating Jurisdiction Representatives	Plan Review and Input Identification and Evaluation of Hazards Identify and Develop Mitigation Goals and Strategies Provide Information to the Public and Seek Citizen Input
Project Consultant	Project Guidance and Advice Research, Data Collection and Fact-Finding Document Preparation and Organization Preparation of Maps and Graphics Meeting Coordination and Presentations Identification and Evaluation of Hazards Identify and Develop Mitigation Goals and Strategies
NYS OEM / FEMA	Plan Guidance, Review, Input and Approval
County Public Works	Plan Review and Input Research, Data Collection and Fact-Finding Preparation of Maps and Graphics Identification and Evaluation of Hazards Identify and Develop Mitigation Goals and Strategies
County Planning and Development	
Soil and Water Conservation District	
National Weather Service	

**E. Project Timeline**

<b>Revised Project Schedule</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Revised Completion Date</b>
Review & Update Hazard-Mitigation Plan	Jan, 2012	Jun, 2013
Project kickoff meeting with the County's Project Manager and HMPC representatives Discuss plan of action and milestones for monitoring progress	Jan, 2012	Jan, 2012
Conduct one (1) interactive workshop / public meeting to describe revision process	Feb, 2012	Mar, 2012
Conduct one (1) interactive workshop / public meeting to review plan revisions	Sept, 2012	Oct, 2012
Review current inventory of available planning documents related to this project	Feb, 2012	Sept, 2012
Provide project correspondence to HMPC	On-going	

Determine Mitigation Actions	Feb, 2012	Dec, 2012
Prioritize Mitigation Actions	Jan, 2013	Jan, 2013
Prepare Implementation Strategy	Jan, 2013	Jan, 2013
Provide draft Mitigation Plan for HMPC and local review	Oct, 2012	June, 2012
Incorporate local revisions and modifications	Jun, 2013	July, 2013
Submit plan to State/FEMA for review and comment.	Jul, 2013	July, 2013
Make revisions and modifications to Incorporate state and FEMA review	Jul, 2013	Aug, 2013
State submits revised plan to FEMA for further review and final approval	Aug, 2013	Aug, 2013
FEMA provides plan approval pending adoptions by County, Town and Village Boards	Aug, 2013	Sept, 2013
Provide printed and digital copies of final approved plan	Sept, 2013	Nov, 2013
Local plan adoptions by County, Town and Village Boards	Aug, 2013	Jan, 2014
Final FEMA approval – pending local adoptions	Nov, 2013	Jan, 2014

## **F. Review of Existing Plans**

### Schoharie County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) 2008

The CEMP is the County's all-hazards disaster preparedness and response plan that addresses all phases of emergency management for the County, including preparedness, response and recovery. The Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan is a part of the comprehensive plan that more specifically addresses preparedness and recovery activities related to preventing and/or reducing the occurrence and/or impacts of disasters. The CEMP forms the foundation and pattern for development of the Hazard Mitigation Plan by setting policies and objectives for inter-governmental and inter-agency coordination of emergency management activities in the county. The integration of resources, leadership and mutual-aid set-forth in the CEMP establish the framework for implementing cooperative strategies essential in a multi-jurisdiction hazard mitigation process.

### Town and Village Comprehensive Community Master Plans

Most towns and villages in Schoharie County have prepared community master plans that serve as a long range guide for growth and development. The master plans identify local goals and objectives that set the direction and focus for local decision making affecting land use, economic activity, community infrastructure and services. Provisions and goals outlined in these plans are reviewed when considering hazard mitigation projects and activities. The table in Section V of this plan outlines the status of local master plans.

### Schoharie County Hazard Analysis (HAZNY)

The HAZNY is part of the County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and is the tool used to identify, evaluate, rank and prioritize the natural and man-made hazards that can impact Schoharie County. The HAZNY is equally essential to the Hazard Mitigation plan where it serves as the foundation for developing the comprehensive risk assessment. The HAZNY was first completed in January, 1999, revised in December, 2003 and updated again in 2012.

### Community-Wide Emergency Agreements

In accordance with New York State General Municipal Law, Schoharie County has established *Mutual Aid Assistance Agreements* with other county and local governments. These agreements provide a mechanism for participating organizations to request assistance and share resources and services in responding to and mitigating a disaster or emergency.

The Schoharie County Office of Emergency Management maintains these agreements with local governments and public safety organizations. Participants in these agreements can also include government departments and agencies, public schools and the college, medical facilities, food pantries and human service organizations, veterinary clinics, church and religious service organizations, businesses and commercial enterprises and industries.

Current agreements exist between Schoharie County and the following local governments and organizations. A sample agreement is included in Appendix 3.

County Mutual Aid Agreements	Local Municipal Plan Agreements
Greene County	Town of Gilboa
Montgomery County	Town of Blenheim
Otsego County	Village of Middleburgh
Schenectady County	Village of Schoharie
Delaware County	Cobleskill
Albany County	West Fulton Fire Department
	Central Bridge Fire Department
	Esperance Fire Department

### Public Health Emergency Operations Plan

The Schoharie County Public Health emergency plan addresses special health preparedness considerations for public health emergencies, natural hazards, pandemic flu outbreaks and terrorist events that threaten safety and health. Planning undertaken for health emergencies is particularly valuable to the hazard mitigation planning process because the goals, strategies, data and information prepared in planning for health threats are key resources needed for implementing mitigation actions related to many hazards that have health impacts.

There is one (1) hospital located within Schoharie County; Cobleskill Regional Hospital, a 40-bed, not-for-profit facility accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). The hospital is affiliated with Bassett Healthcare and provides inpatient care for general medical conditions, outpatient and emergency services. Schoharie residents also receive health care at fourteen (14) hospitals and two (2) medical centers located in neighboring counties.

Schoharie County Hazardous Material Plan

The Schoharie County Hazardous Material Plan maintained by the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and required under provisions of the federal Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) Title, III Act, provides a plan for response to facilities that manufacture or use hazardous materials. In most situations, facilities must identify the types, amounts and locations of chemicals they use or store, and in other situations they must participate with the LEPC in planning for a chemical release or response at or near their site. The plan provides valuable background for the Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan and Schoharie County's Haz-Mat Response Team in developing actions and strategies to mitigate hazardous material emergencies.

NYS State Hazard Mitigation Plan (2011)

The State Hazard Mitigation Plan is an excellent resource that provides information and guidance for development of the County plan. Many communities across New York share similar experiences and vulnerabilities to hazards. The State Plan shows how exposure, preparedness and mitigation for many hazards are often similar from region to region, while at the same time demonstrating how certain areas and communities face specific concerns and have varied priorities.

Schoharie Valley Flooding and/or Dam Failure Guidelines (2007)

The plan supplement's the Schoharie County CEMP by establishing procedures specific to mitigation, response and recovery operations for a failure at the Gilboa Reservoir dam that is part of the New York City water supply system located in the south of Schoharie County. Special emphasis is placed on the use of phased planning and evacuation to increase the safety of residents in the Schoharie Creek valley. The plan prepares for a *Type A* event – when a breach or failure of the dam is imminent or has occurred; and a *Type B* event – when a potentially hazardous situation at the dam is developing.

**G. Coordination with Neighboring Counties and Plans**

Throughout the planning process, staff met with and had regular discussions with the Emergency Management Directors and mitigation officers in neighboring counties. These discussions included a review of common hazard mitigation concerns and goals in area communities and helped to identify potential mitigation strategies, resources and projects.

Schoharie County Emergency Management staff participate in regular monthly meetings of county emergency management staff in the eastern region of New York. These meetings include representatives of the New York State Office of Emergency Management and the National Weather Service; hazard mitigation planning and programs are regularly discussed.

Schoharie County Planning staff regularly meet with planning officers from other counties in the region, including forums scheduled by the Southern Tier East Regional Planning and Development Board. The regional planning board is very active in hazard mitigation activities, particularly in areas of water resource protection, stormwater and floodplain management and development standards.

County highway and public works staff participate in regional meetings with the State Department of Transportation (DOT), where their counterparts from other counties in the region are also present. Hazard Mitigation priorities, projects and funding related to roads, highways, bridges and local storm drainage systems are regularly discussed at these meetings.

In preparing the Schoharie County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan, planning staff reviewed and referenced the hazard mitigation plans of other rural, upstate New York counties; including the hazard mitigation plans prepared by Yates, Tioga, Jefferson and Oswego counties.

Schoharie County and neighboring Greene County are both part of the Schoharie Creek watershed, where much of the upland drainage collects in Greene County and eventually flows through Schoharie County. Flood protection and prevention for Schoharie County can be significantly affected by what is done or not done in Greene County. Schoharie County planning and emergency management staff regularly meet with officials of neighboring Greene County to discuss hazard mitigation projects, priorities and opportunities.

## **H. Citizen Participation**

### Website and Municipal Access

The 2006 Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan was posted on the Schoharie County Emergency Management website for public access, viewing and comment. This 2013 update has also been posted for public review on the website. It was also announced that the draft 2013 plan is available at town and village municipal offices, the Schoharie County Emergency Management Office and the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency. County and municipal officials have been asked to announce at local meetings and forums that the plan is available for public review at local offices and on the web.

### Discussion at Public Meetings

As noted above, the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee and planning team members encouraged municipal officials to seek public input and discuss the Hazard Mitigation plan at public meetings and forums whenever possible. While it is commonly acknowledged, and is described in the section below, that public participation was incorporated into the planning process, not all jurisdictions captured citizen participation activities in local records or reports.

### Integrated Public Participation

The principal method for soliciting public participation in the hazard mitigation plan was through direct contact the planning team members had with citizens and community groups. Over the planning period, members of the Steering Committee, agency contacts and representatives of the participating jurisdictions were involved in discussions and listened to the views of interested parties throughout the county related to hazard mitigation needs, proposals and improvements. Most of these personal interactions were not recorded in reports or meeting minutes, but were shared and incorporated in the planning process as hazard mitigation goals and objectives were developed.

As noted in the introduction to this plan, Schoharie County is sparsely populated and best known for its rural, small-town character. As a result of the strong community ties and integrated involvement of citizens and leaders among government and civic organizations, ample means and opportunities are available to insure the public has a say when it comes to the goals and content of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Those responsible for preparing this Hazard Mitigation Plan - including members of the planning committee, agency leaders and representatives of the participating jurisdictions - are also members, or are associated with a wide range of boards, committees and public interest groups in the County. For example, members of the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee who also serve as Town Supervisors and/or Village Mayors are elected by residents to hear and represent citizen interests. Further strengthening the lines for feedback and cooperation is the recognition that local elected and agency officials in Schoharie County, including those responsible for preparing the Hazard Mitigation Plan, are members of their local volunteer fire departments, civic and veterans clubs, school boards, planning and zoning boards and related community service organizations. This kind of integrated community networking and cross-cultural participation provide a valuable and very effective platform to

insure that public contributions are a fundamental part of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. In such a close-knit communal setting, many of the hazard mitigation objectives and actions listed in Section VI of this plan would have first been discussed at the kitchen tables of local citizens or at the village restaurants where members of the public and government leaders mingle. Other examples of how this grassroots outreach worked to assimilate citizen participation into the Hazard Mitigation Plan include the following.

- Many of the projects identified in Section VI of this plan that address flood prevention and drainage improvements were first proposed by the Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District or other technical specialists. In most cases, the problem areas, targeted sites and associated solutions were suggested years or decades ago and have been repeatedly discussed in the public domain as citizens and officials sought opportunities and funding to implement improvements.
- Many of the hazard mitigation actions outlined for flood protection and prevention in Section VI are a direct outcome of discussions local officials had with citizens and property owners. As a result of serious flooding and even repetitive damages, the identification and design of projects identified in Section VI would have started as a response to resident inquiries and requests. In most situations, the solutions and projects needed to address the concerns of residents are proposed by the local highway superintendents or municipal engineers – and often designed by the area Soil and Water District agent – but the process to identify a problem area and a discussion of potential mitigation options would have begun while standing face-to-face with citizens and residents in the front yards of their neighborhoods.

#### Targeted Citizen Access and Input

Due to the complexity of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and other factors, local officials in Schoharie County believe the best opportunities for insuring citizen participation involve local government leaders and planning staff going directly to the people, often in one-on-one discussions with residents and neighbors, or at regular local organization meetings held at the town and village halls or fire stations. Schoharie officials have avoided using dedicated public forums or citizen briefings to present the Hazard Mitigation Plan, mostly because few residents have the time or expertise to not only read through a complex planning document, but also articulate their opinions and concerns in a large and open community forum. For example, on the heels of the devastating 2011 flooding in Schoharie County, any attempt to conduct a productive open meeting to discuss the hazard mitigation projects would quickly and unavoidably turn into a critique of the 2011 flood response and the FEMA recovery program that followed; an effort to redirect and maintain a focus on the 2013 plan update would be limited and frustrating for those attending.



**I. Local Adoption**

FEMA completed their review of the content and provisions of the updated Schoharie County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan in September of 2013 and notified the county that the plan is '*Approved Pending Adoption*'. This pending approval indicates that the plan meets federal hazard mitigation planning requirements and standards and that final FEMA approval will be granted after the Schoharie County Board of Supervisors and each of the town and village boards adopt the plan and submit their approved local resolution to the county.

The sample adoption resolution and each of the approved local adopting resolutions (when available) are included in Appendix 4.